THE

CONSPIRACY OF KINGS;

A POEM.

[Price ONE SHILLING and SIXPENCE.]

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THE CONSPIRACY OF KINGS;

A POEM:

ADDRESSED

TO THE INHABITANTS OF EUROPE,

FROM ANOTHER QUARTER OF THE WORLD.

Δημοφαγον δε τυραννον οπως εθελεις καλαχλιναι
Ου Νεμεσις προς θεων γιγνεται ευδεμια.

THEOGNIS.

" But they, in ſooth, muſt *reaſon*. Curſes light
" On the proud talent! 'twill at laſt undo us.
" When men are gorged with each abſurdity
" Their ſubtil wits can frame, or we adopt,
" For very novelty they'll fly to ſenſe,
" And we muſt fall before the idol, Faſhion."

MYSTERIOUS MOTHER, Act IV.

By JOEL BARLOW, Eſq;

AUTHOR OF " ADVICE TO THE PRIVILEGED ORDERS," AND OF " THE VISION OF COLUMBUS."

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.

1792.

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THE

CONSPIRACY OF KINGS.

ETERNAL Truth, thy trump undaunted lend,
People and prieſts and courts and kings, attend;
While, borne on weſtern gales from that far ſhore
Where Juſtice reigns, and tyrants tread no more,
Th' unwonted voice, that no diſſuaſion awes,
That fears no frown, and ſeeks no blind applauſe,
Shall tell the bliſs that Freedom ſheds abroad,
The rights of nature and the gift of God.

Think not, ye knaves, whom meanneſs ſtyles the Great,
Drones of the Church and harpies of the State,——
Ye, whoſe curſt fires, for blood and plunder fam'd,
Sultans or kings or czars or emp'rors nam'd,
Taught the deluded world their claims to own,
And raiſe the creſted reptiles to a throne,——

Ye,

Ye, who pretend to your dark hoſt was given
The lamp of life, the myſtic keys of heaven;
Whoſe impious arts with magic ſpells began
When ſhades of ign'rance veil'd the race of man;
Who change, from age to age, the fly deceit
As Science beams, and Virtue learns the cheat;
Tyrants of double powers, the ſoul that blind,
To rob, to ſcourge, and brutalize mankind,——
Think not I come to croak with omen'd yell
The dire damnations of your future hell,
To bend a bigot or reform a knave,
By op'ning all the ſcenes beyond the grave.
I know your cruſted ſouls: while one defies
In ſceptic ſcorn the vengeance of the ſkies,
The other boaſts,—" I ken thee, Power divine,
" But fear thee not; th' avenging bolt is mine."

No! 'tis the preſent world that prompts the ſong,
The world we ſee, the world that feels the wrong,
The world of men, whoſe arguments ye know,
Of men, long curb'd to ſervitude and wo,

Men,

BRITISH MUSEUM 31 MAY 19

Men, rous'd from ſloth, by indignation ſtung,
Their ſtrong hands loos'd, and found their fearleſs tongue;
Whoſe voice of fire, whoſe deep-deſcending ſteel
Shall ſpeak to ſouls, and teach dull nerves to feel.

Think not (ah no! the weak deluſion ſhun,
Burke leads you wrong, the world is not his own),
Indulge not once the thought, the vapory dream,
The fool's repaſt, the mad-man's thread-bare theme,
That nations, riſing in the light of truth,
Strong with new life and pure regenerate youth,
Will ſhrink from toils ſo ſplendidly begun,
Their bliſs abandon and their glory ſhun,
Betray the truſt by Heav'n's own hand conſign'd,
The great concentred ſtake, the intereſt of mankind.

Ye ſpeak of Kings combin'd, ſome league that draws
Europe's whole force, to ſave your ſinking cauſe;
Of fancy'd hoſts by myriads that advance
To cruſh the untry'd power of new-born France.
Miſguided men! theſe idle tales deſpiſe;
Let one bright ray of reaſon ſtrike your eyes;

Show me your kings, the ſceptred horde parade,——
See their pomp vaniſh! ſee your viſions fade!
Indignant MAN reſumes the ſhaft he gave,
Diſarms the tyrant, and unbinds the ſlave,
Diſplays the unclad ſkeletons of kings *,
Spectres of power, and ſerpents without ſtings.
And ſhall mankind,—ſhall France, whoſe giant might
Rent the dark veil, and dragg'd them forth to light,
Heed now their threats in dying anguiſh toſt?
And She who fell'd the monſter, fear the ghoſt?
Bid young Alcides, in his graſp who takes,
And gripes with naked hand the twiſting ſnakes,
Their force exhauſted, bid him proſtrate fall,
And dread their ſhadows trembling on the wall.

But grant to kings and courts their ancient play,
Recall their ſplendour and revive their ſway;
Can all your cant and all your cries perſuade
One power to join you in your wild cruſade?
In vain ye ſearch to earth's remoteſt end;
No court can aid you, and no king defend.

* Oſſa vides regum vacuis exhauſta medullis.
JUVENAL, Sat. 8.

Not the mad knave that S—— ſceptre ſtole,
Nor She, whoſe thunder ſhakes the northern pole;
Nor Frederic's widow'd ſword, that ſcorns to tell
On whoſe weak brow his crown reluctant fell.
Not the tri-ſceptred prince, of Auſtrian mould,
The ape of wiſdom and the ſlave of gold,
Thereſa's ſon, who, with a feeble grace,
Juſt mimics all the vices of his race;
For him no charm can foreign ſtrife afford,
Too mean to ſpend his wealth, too wiſe to truſt his ſword.

Peep o'er the Pyrenees,—but you'll diſdain
To break the dream that ſooths the Monk of Spain.
He counts his beads, and ſpends his holy zeal
To raiſe once more th' inquiſitorial wheel,
Prepares the faggot and the flame renews,
To roaſt the French, as once the Moors and Jews;
While abler hands the buſy taſk divide,
His Queen to dandle and his State to guide.

Ye aſk great Pitt to join your deſp'rate work,——
See how his annual aid confounds the Turk!

Like a war-elephant his bulk he ſhows,
And treads down friends, when frighten'd by his foes.

Where then, forſaken villains, will ye turn?
Of France the outcaſt and of earth the ſcorn;
What new-made charm can diſſipate your fears?
Can Burke's mad foam, or Calonne's houſe of Peers *?
Can Artois' ſword, that erſt near Calpe's wall,
Where Crillon fought and Elliot was to fall,
Burn'd with the fire of fame, but harmleſs burn'd,
For ſheath'd the ſword remain'd, and in its ſheath return'd †?

Oh

* M. de Calonne, at an immenſe labour, and by the aid of his friends in England, has framed a Conſtitution for France, after the Engliſh model; the chief ornament of which is that "Corinthian capital of poliſhed ſociety," a Houſe of Peers. It is ſaid that, after debates and altercations which laſted ſix months, he has perſuaded the emigrant princes to agree to it. It only remains now for him and them to try on this new livery upon the French nation.

† Among the diſadvantages attending the lives of Princes, muſt be reckoned the ſingular difficulties with which they have to ſtruggle in acquiring a military reputation. A Duke of Cumberland, in order to become an Alexander, had to ride all the way to Culloden, and back again to London. Louis the Fourteenth was obliged to ſubmit to the fatigue of being carried on board of a ſplendid barge, and rowed acroſs the Rhine, about the ſame time that the French army croſſed it; and all this for the ſimple privilege of being placed above the Macedonian in the temple of Fame; and of cauſing this atchievement

Oh Burke, degenerate ſlave! with grief and ſhame
The Muſe indignant muſt repeat thy name.
Strange man, declare,—ſince, at creation's birth,
From crumbling Chaos ſprang this heav'n and earth,
Since wrecks and outcaſt relics ſtill remain,
Whirl'd ceaſeleſs round Confuſion's dreary reign,
Declare, from all theſe fragments, whence you ſtole
That genius wild, that monſtrous maſs of ſoul;
Where ſpreads the wideſt waſte of all extremes,
Full darkneſs frowns, and heav'n's own ſplendour beams;
Truth, Error, Falſehood, Rhetoric's raging tide,
And Pomp and Meanneſs, Prejudice and Pride,
Strain to an endleſs clang thy voice of fire,
Thy thoughts bewilder and thy audience tire.

ment to be celebrated, as more glorious than the paſſing of the Granicus: as may be ſeen on that modeſt monument in the *Place Vendome* in Paris.

The Count d'Artois has purchaſed, at a ſtill dearer rate, the fame of being ſtyled "*le digne rejeton du grand Henri*," and of being deſtined to command all the armies of Europe in re-eſtabliſhing the Monarchy of France. This champion of Chriſtendom ſet out, at the age of twenty-five, and travelled by land with a princely equipage, from Paris to Gibraltar; where he arrived juſt in time to ſee, at a convenient diſtance, Elliot's famous bonfire of the floating batteries. He then returned, covered with glory, by the way of Madrid; and arrived at Verſailles, amidſt the careſſes of the court and the applauſes of all Europe. The accompliſhment of this arduous enterpriſe has deſervedly placed him, in point of military fame, at the head of all the preſent branches of the illuſtrious houſe of Bourbon.

Like Phœbus' ſon, we ſee thee wing thy way,
Snatch the looſe reins, and mount the car of day,
To earth now plunging plough thy waſting courſe,
The great Sublime of weakneſs and of force.
But while the world's keen eye, with generous glance,
Thy faults could pardon and thy worth enhance,
When foes were huſh'd, when Juſtice dar'd commend,
And e'en fond Freedom claim'd thee as a friend,
Why in a gulph of baſeneſs ſink forlorn,
And change pure praiſe for infamy and ſcorn?

And didſt thou hope, by thy infuriate quill
To rouſe mankind the blood of realms to ſpill?
Then to reſtore, on death-devoted plains,
Their ſcourge to tyrants, and to man his chains?
To ſwell their ſouls with thy own bigot rage,
And blot the glories of ſo bright an age?
Firſt ſtretch thy arm, and, with leſs impious might,
Wipe out the ſtars, and quench the ſolar light:
" *For heav'n and earth*," the voice of God ordains,
" *Shall paſs and periſh, but my word remains*,"

Th'

Th' eternal WORD, which gave, in ſpite of thee,
REASON to man, that bids the man be free.

Thou could'ſt not hope: 'twas Heav'n's returning grace,
In kind compaſſion to our injur'd race,
Which ſtripp'd that foul, ere it ſhould flee from hence,
Of the laſt garb of decency or ſenſe,
Left thee its own foul horrors to diſplay,
In all the blackneſs of its native day,
To ſink at laſt, from earth's glad ſurface hurl'd,
The ſordid ſov'reign of the letter'd world.

In ſome ſad hour, ere death's dim terrors ſpread,
Ere ſeas of dark oblivion whelm thy head,
Reflect, loſt man,—If thoſe, thy kindred knaves,
O'er the broad Rhine whoſe flag rebellious waves,
Once draw the ſword; its burning point ſhall bring
To thy quick nerves a never-ending ſting;
The blood they ſhed thy weight of wo ſhall ſwell,
And their grim ghoſts for ever with thee dwell.

Learn hence, ye tyrants, ere ye learn too late,
Of all your craft th' inevitable fate.
The hour is come, the world's uncloſing eyes
Diſcern with rapture where its wiſdom lies;
From weſtern heav'ns th' inverted Orient ſprings,
The morn of man, the dreadful night of kings.
Dim, like the day-ſtruck owl, ye grope in light,
No arm for combat, no reſource in flight;
If on your guards your lingering hopes repoſe,
Your guards are men, and men you've made your foes;
If to your rocky ramparts ye repair,
* De Launay's fate can tell your fortune there.
No turn, no ſhift, no courtly arts avail,
Each maſk is broken, all illuſions fail;
Driv'n to your laſt retreat of ſhame and fear,
One counſel waits you, one relief is near:
By worth internal, riſe to ſelf-wrought fame,
Your equal rank, your human kindred claim;

* De Launay was the laſt governor of the Baſtille. His well-known exit, ſerving as a warning to others, ſaved the lives of many commanders of Fortreſſes in different parts of France during the revolution. It may probably have the ſame ſalutary effect in other countries.

'Tis

'Tis Reaſon's choice, 'tis Wiſdom's final plan,
To drop the monarch and aſſume the man.

Hail MAN, exalted title! firſt and beſt,
On God's own image by his hand impreſt;
To which at laſt the reas'ning race is driv'n,
And ſeeks anew what firſt it gain'd from Heav'n.
O MAN, my brother, how the cordial flame
Of all endearments kindles at the name!
In every clime, thy viſage greets my eyes,
In every tongue thy kindred accents riſe;
The thought expanding ſwells my heart with glee,
It finds a friend, and loves itſelf in thee.

Say then, fraternal family divine,
Whom mutual wants and mutual aids combine,
Say from what ſource the dire deluſion roſe,
That ſouls like ours were ever made for foes;
Why earth's maternal boſom, where we tread,
To rear our manſions and receive our bread,
Should bluſh ſo often for the race ſhe bore,
So long be drench'd with floods of filial gore;

Why to ſmall realms for ever reſt confin'd
Our great affections, meant for all mankind.
Though climes divide us; ſhall the ſtream or ſea,
That forms a barrier 'twixt my friend and me,
Inſpire the wiſh his peaceful ſtate to mar,
And meet his falchion in the ranks of war?

Not ſeas, nor climes, nor wild ambition's fire
In nations' minds could e'er the wiſh inſpire;
Where equal rights each ſober voice ſhould guide,
No blood would ſtain them, and no war divide.
'Tis dark deception, 'tis the glare of ſtate,
Man ſunk in titles, loſt in Small and Great;
'Tis Rank, Diſtinction, all the hell that ſprings
From thoſe prolific monſters, Courts and Kings.
Theſe are the vampires nurs'd on nature's ſpoils;
For theſe with pangs the ſtarving peaſant toils,
For theſe the earth's broad ſurface teems with grain,
Theirs the dread labours of the devious main;
And when the waſted world but dares refuſe
The gifts oppreſſive and extorted dues,

They bid wild ſlaughter ſpread the gory plains,
The life-blood guſhing from a thouſand veins,
Erect their thrones amid the ſanguine flood,
And dip their purple in the nation's blood.

The gazing crowd, of glittering State afraid,
Adore the Power their coward meanneſs made;
In war's ſhort intervals, while regal ſhows
Still blind their reaſon and inſult their woes.
What ſtrange events for proud Proceſſions call!
See kingdoms crowding to a Birth-night Ball!
See the long pomp in gorgeous glare diſplay'd,
The tinſel'd guards, the ſquadron'd horſe parade;
See herald's gay, with emblems on their veſt,
In tiſſu'd robes, tall, beauteous pages dreſt;
Amid ſuperior ranks of ſplendid ſlaves,
Lords, Dukes and Princes, titulary knaves,
Confus'dly ſhine their croſſes, gems and ſtars,
Sceptres and globes and crowns and ſpoils of wars.
On gilded orbs ſee thundering chariots roll'd,
Steeds, ſnorting fire, and champing bits of gold,

Prance to the trumpet's voice; while each aſſumes
A loftier gait, and lifts his neck of plumes.
High on a moving throne, and near the van,
The tyrant rides, the choſen ſcourge of man;
Clarions and flutes and drums his way prepare,
And ſhouting millions rend the troubled air;
Millions, whoſe ceaſeleſs toils the pomp ſuſtain,
Whoſe hour of ſtupid joy repays an age of pain.

Of theſe no more. From Orders, Slaves and Kings,
To thee, O MAN, my heart rebounding ſprings.
Behold th' aſcending bliſs that waits your call,
Heav'n's own bequeſt, the heritage of all.
Awake to wiſdom, ſeize the proffer'd prize;
From ſhade to light, from grief to glory riſe.
Freedom at laſt, with Reaſon in her train,
Extends o'er earth her everlaſting reign;
See Gallia's ſons, ſo late the tyrant's ſport,
Machines in war and ſycophants at court,
Start into men, expand their well-taught mind,
Lords of themſelves and leaders of mankind.

On equal rights their baſe of empire lies,
On walls of wiſdom ſee the ſtructure riſe;
Wide o'er the gazing world it towers ſublime,
A modell'd form for each ſurrounding clime.
To uſeful toils they bend their nobleſt aim,
Make patriot views and moral views the ſame,
Renounce the wiſh of war, bid conqueſt ceaſe,
Invite all men to happineſs and peace,
To faith and juſtice rear the youthful race,
With ſtrength exalt them and with ſcience grace,
Till Truth's bleſt banners, o'er the regions hurl'd,
Shake tyrants from their thrones, and cheer the waking world.

In northern climes, where feudal ſhades of late
Chill'd every heart and palſied every State,
Behold, illumin'd by th' inſtructive age,
That great phenomenon, a Sceptred Sage.
There Staniſlaus unfolds his prudent plan,
Tears the ſtrong bandage from the eyes of man,
Points the progreſſive march, and ſhapes the way,
That leads a realm from darkneſs into day.

And deign, for once, to turn
To that wide world that ſkirts the weſtern ſky,
Hail the mild morning, where the dawn began,
The full fruition of the hopes of man,
Where ſage Experience ſeals the ſolemn cauſe;
And that rare union, Liberty and Laws,
Speaks to the reaſ'ning race "to freedom riſe,
Like them be equal, and like them be wiſe."

THE END.

Juſt publiſhed, by the ſame Author,

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